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06/20/2012 Minutes

Minutes for the ABAC meeting of June 20, 2012

Board members present, were Christopher Tonkin, Ron Sender, Scott Smith, Stephan Miller and Doug Greenfield. Joey Glushko, Jim Marzilli, and Anthony Beckwith were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

We all introduced ourselves for the benefit of the first time attendee.

*The minutes for the May meeting were approved after substantive changes.

TAC Report. Scott briefly outlined the plan to connect the bike path through Arlington Center using bike lanes on Mass. Ave. He told us that there have been some objections to the plan because of the loss of some parking spaces in the Center. The DPW developed an alternative that retained the parking spaces by using narrower travel lanes. suggested that the parking could be retained if the travel lanes were narrowed. The proposed plan keeps the median, and has a 5-foot bike lane and 10-foot travel lanes. The plan also includes a traffic signal at Swan Place. Jim asked if crossing using the new lights will be on demand or part of every cycle. The cross-light will be on demand, but would need to be coordinated with the existing signal at Mass Ave / Route 60. Doug asked if there has been a traffic study of this plan. Scott told us that there has been only some preliminary signal timing modeling work done. We then discussed the adequacy of the space for bicycles on Mass. Ave. east of Swan Pl. where there are no bike lanes in the plan. Members of the committee agreed that a wide shared right lane with an 8-foot parking lane would be more appropriate than the wide parking lane depicted in the plan. Scott will forward our concerns to the planning department.

Scott also recapped the results of the counts of bikeway traffic taken at the Bikeway/Lake St. intersection last spring. Jim asked for the auto traffic numbers at that intersection. Scott answered that it is about 1000 cars per hour at the peak in both directions and that TAC is working at alleviating the traffic on Lake St. if possible. While on the topic of traffic in East Arlington, Joey told us that EALS changed the focus of their letter to the Selectmen to pedestrian traffic. We decided to table our support letter because of the lack of relevance to bicyclists.

Recreational Trails Grant Program. Joey told us that Stephan did a map of the entrances to the bike path that will be used to annotate the new bikeway map. She then explained the purpose of the grant for the first time attendees. Scott commented that this effort should be coordinated with the recently initiated effort by the Town to promote tourism and economic development.

ABAC on the Web. Doug told us that he has some issues with the Topica mailing list. He thinks that it is working but is not sure. He also told us that the ABAC web page is now live and linked to the Town web site. There is some ABAC information on the Town's site and Ron suggested that this could be difficult to keep coordinated. We decided to try to concentrate as much of the information as we can on the ABAC controlled site and eliminate the extra page between the Town site and the ABAC site.

Repainting the center line of the Minuteman Bikeway and Bikeway surface damage caused by tree roots. We discussed a recent accident that occurred on the path that was due to the unevenness of the pavement. Ron thought we should keep track of these incidents more than we have. Ron also suggested (as he had done a couple of meetings back) that the rough areas, particularly the section between Lake St and Linwood, be marked with "caution-rough area" signs. And that the rough-patch markings be frequently repainted (re-marked) until the surface was repaired. Stephan suggested that if we start requesting repairs now, the DPW may get to them by the late fall.

Support of Arlington Police enforcement program of traffic rules related to cyclists behavior in Arlington. We discussed the "Town of Arlington Bicycle Law" leaflet recently distributed by the Arlington Police Department. Scott told us that he can't support the document as written due to its statement about keeping to the right of the travel lane (in many situations, such as parked cars, debris or potholes near the edge of the road, or a narrow travel lane, keeping all the way to the right is unsafe). He also told us that in this respect it is inconsistent with the MassDOT/MassBike campaign (<http://sameroadssamerules.org>) for roadway safety. Scott suggested our current bicycle safety brochure already contains the necessary information.

Bikeway User Counts. Joey asked whether we thought we should take bikeway counts again this summer. Last summer, the counts we took were coordinated with a State program to measure alternative modes of transportation. Joey has not heard from the State

this summer and would like to know if we think that we should do the counts independently. We answered in the affirmative. Joey will contact EALS to ask if they are willing to take counts on Mass. Ave. in East Arlington this summer to augment our data. We discussed possible dates to do the counts. Joey will contact Lexington and find out when they will be doing their counts in hopes that we can coordinate.

Adult Tricycles on sidewalks. Joey attended the most recent meeting of the Arlington Disability Commission where this topic was discussed. She told us that the commission is willing to take the lead on this issue. They will introduce the topic again next month at their meeting and decide whether they will take on the task of drafting a warrant article to clarify the issue. Jim asked whether Joey thought that this issue requires additional political effort or the need to inform the public about the transportation needs of the handicapped. Joey suggested that it might be a matter of clarifying the current bylaw rather than drafting a new one.

Moving Together articles for the Arlington Advocate. Scott told us that the Advocate seems to be in a bit of flux. Two articles have been submitted but have not been published. We briefly discussed topics for future articles and what we could do to restart the effort. Stephan suggested that an article on helmet muse might be a good idea.

Mass Commute Bike Challenge Award. Scott explained to us how the rules for the challenge were changed this year. The number of bicycle commuters from a given city or town were calculated on a per capita basis. This change caused Arlington to win the first place award. We discussed what to do with the award. We concluded that we would present it to the Selectmen at an upcoming meeting. Hopefully this will help increase the visibility of bicycle commuting from Arlington.

Locations for "Bike Friendly Community" recognition signs. Jim suggested that the signs be placed on the path at the east and west entrances to Arlington. After some discussion we thought that the signs should be on the road so everyone, not just those on bicycles, can see them. We decided that the Mass. Ave. gateways to the town would be a good location but we will let the Selectmen make the final decision.

Open discussion. Joey told us that Starbucks would like to participate in some Bikeway activity this year. We may consider this for another year.

Joey received a request from an Arlington resident who would like to plan a fund raiser 5K run on the bicycle path. While on this topic, she added that the Town Manager wants ABAC to formulate a policy for special uses of the bike path. We tabled this issue until a later date.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 pm.

*Notes that a vote of the board was taken.

Minutes submitted by Stephan Miller